

Use social media effectively

A guide on how to effectively use social media to promote your self and your work.

Written by Evaldas Azbukauskas

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Introduction

So you released your album or an EP on a label. Congratulations! However, that does not guarantee a success for your release. But don't worry, I'm not going to tell you about how much work you need to put in, if you want to succeed. You already know that. But what I want to teach you, is that you need to obtain correct habits when using social media, which I believe you already use.

What I noticed, is that most artists who release their music on my label have no idea what to do with their social network profiles, how to properly promote their releases. Of course, you could say, isn't the whole promo thing supposed to be done by the label? Well, there's only so much a small independent label can do, especially if it's run by one or two people, and they have to manage dozens of artists. Moreover, nowadays, artists tend to run their own social media to retain their own image and interaction with fans. How would you feel, if someone took this freedom from you, and presented you to the public in an unauthentic way? You want to be you, and who knows who are you, better than yourself.

Common practices to know

Before going into the details about how to correctly use social media I want to explain a few things. By social media, I mean these sites: facebook, soundcloud, youtube, instagram, twitter etc. You don't have to use all of them though. You can pick any number of any ones you prefer. Basically any site where you can create your own profile and interact with other people online is a social media site. Every profile has to be set up 100%. Nobody will be interested in a profile which is abandoned, not taken care of. Here are a few tips:

- You must have all the visual side of a profile set up: profile photo, cover photo, background etc;
- Have at least a few sentences about who you are and what do you do;
- Have all the required links set up. Every profile must have links that direct to your album and other social media profiles;
- Let people know your e-mail adress;
- Stay active.

If you can't stay active on a particular social network, don't even start it. For example, if you don't like making videos, you don't need a youtube channel. Basically, try to use your time effectively, don't waste it on something you don't like to do, something you don't find interesting. There's nothing you have to force your self to do. Focus on what is your craft – music. You don't have to be a photographer, a film maker, a writer. But you can stay in touch with your fans through social media and it's not that difficult at all.

Facebook

As I said before, feel free to use any number of any social networks you like. But, I always recommend using Facebook, for a simple reason – it's the most popular social network in the world. Nothing can compete with facebook.

The main question is of course, **how do you gain likes for your page**. I wish there was a magic method which is super effective, but there isn't. You can start off by inviting people from your personal friend list to like your page. Also, post a link to your facebook page on other social networks. Your twitter, instagram or any other social media profile should have a link to your facebook page. Also, separate posts, like a particular youtube video should also have a link to your facebook profile in it's description. Basically, use a link to your facebook page everywhere you can. If you notice anybody talking about you, for example somebody posted a track of your's, you can post a link to your facebook page in the comments and invite people to like. Also, post frequently, which leads us to the next question.

How often should you post? I'd say, at least three times a week. Another good strategy to consider is to post something every day. The more frequently you post, the more new likes you can expect. An active page is a lot more attractive than one that is not. And, you don't let people to forget about you, which is a good thing. If you post very often, let's say every day, you don't have to make every post a work of art. It could be just a link to one of your tracks, a link to a fan-made youtube video, a link to your track on spotify etc. But, every now and then you should make what I call a "good post".

What is a good post like? A good post is something that contains good content. It should contain some interesting text and a complementary photo or music (or even both).

Few ideas about what to write about:

- What inspired this particular track you're posting;
- A story related to this particular track;
- Thoughts, visions this particular track evokes in you;
- Process of making this track;
- Keep people posted about your progress of making a track or an album.

Remember, always have complementary photo or music for the text you write. Try to make your post a multi-media experience as much as you can.

Things you should avoid writing about: politics, social problems, celebrities etc. Unless your project is related to these things. For example, I have a project that is related to nature, so I often write about my personal relationship with it, my experiences in it etc. Another example could be if you are a political rap artist. However, the focus should always be on your music more than anything else.

SoundCloud

Make sure your profile is set up 100%. Profile pic, cover picture, info, e-mail, links and at least a few of your tracks with all the required meta-data are there.

If all of that is in place, you can do something that is very effective in gaining followers and advertising your self, which may result in a lot of new fans. This strategy is called **rapid following**. It may sound like I'm offering you to follow big numbers of random people. Not at all. You can target this strategy to people who like your type of music.

Here's what you can do: find a profile of an artist who makes a similar type of music like you, who could potentially have an audience which could enjoy your sound as well. Then start following this artist's followers. It can be time consuming, but I recommend doing this at least once, until you reach the 2000 follows limit. You don't have to do it all in one day. You can follow some people every day. It will give a good boost of new followers, likes and comments. And, if some of these people will like your music enough, they will check your links to your other social media profiles.

Here's an important thing to understand. New uploads pop up in the stream of your followers. Old uploads are only discovered if someone checks your profile. So it's important to upload new stuff consistently. Otherwise, people will have no reason to visit your profile and they will forget about you completely.

Another important thing. When you release an EP or an album on a label, it's not enough to just update the info of the tracks you already had uploaded on your account. Updating info does not do anything to make people check your track again, or find out that you have a new release which just came out. What you have to do is to **make a new upload!** It is very important. Because, like I already said, by making a new upload, your track appears in the stream for your followers. That way they find out that you have a new release. Otherwise, how are they going to know? Don't worry if the same music has been uploaded before. The goal is to announce a new release. Treat it as any other social network. It's just a post. Delete the old upload if you want, nobody cares!

Other Sites

Twitter. If you are trying to build a following in USA (or other country where twitter is very popular), then use twitter. Otherwise, feel free not to use it, because it's not that popular in other parts of the world. If you decide to use it, same rules apply as in other networks: post frequently, use all kinds of media (pictures, videos, music).

YouTube. Very powerful if used properly! But you must enjoy making videos, and make them often if you want to take advantage of it's power. Otherwise, don't waste your time. There are artists who built their careers mainly with youtube. Some ideas about what kind of videos to make: you performing your music, you explaining how you made a certain track, a "how to" video, instrument or hardware demonstration or a review, footage from a gig, your music with visuals, your music with cover art of a release for promotion, you talking about your inspirations of an album or a track etc. The more video content you can produce the better. Everybody likes whatching cool videos.

Instagram. Good idea if you are taking a lot of photos or you see your self as a photographer. It could be a good visual dimension to your whole social media game. But again, if your account is going to be eventually abandoned, then why even start it.

Final Words

There are many other social media sites, like google+ and a lot of new ones. My advice – don't waste your time for them. Before they have enough users and become popular, it's not worth it. You'll know when it's time to use them. It's when you can't run away from it, like facebook or youtube.

Another thing that artists trying to build a following in social media often don't understand is that people are overwhelmed with possibilities on the internet, and if you don't make it easy for them, if you don't guide them to where you want them to go, they won't do anything. You can't just post "There are some new stuff on my soundcloud, check it out". That could only serve as an example of what you shouldn't do. Always post a link which leads to exactly where you need people to go. ALWAYS! Don't expect people to put effort in finding your stuff. Why would they? If there is no link to check out, you just keep scrolling down. Nowadays, it's almost rude to expect someone to search for your content. It has to be delivered to the user and be fully prepared to use.

So as you can see, it's not about putting a lot of work into it, it's about knowing how to properly do it when you're doing it. It's about forming good, productive habits. You have to find what you enjoy the most and embrace that. You spend a lot of time on facebook? Perfect, try to improve your posts. With practice you will achieve better result. You make a lot of new tracks all the time? There's SoundCloud for that. You like making videos? Use youtube.

I hope you will find my advice useful.

Good luck!